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ABSTRACT

A biography for elementary school students presents an account of an American Indian television reporter, Tom Beaver (Creek), and includes a map of Oklahoma showing the location of Indian tribes. A teacher's guide following the biography contains information about the Creek tribe and the history of television, learning objectives and directions for teachers, suggested activities and worksheets, vocabulary lists, resources list, and an evaluation checklist. (LFL)

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TOM BEAVER

CREEK

TELEVISION REPORTER

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TOM BEAVER
CREEK
TELEVISION REPORTER

Tom Beaver is from the Creek tribe of Oklahoma. He was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma on May 7, 1947. Most of the Creek live in the mideastern section of Oklahoma.

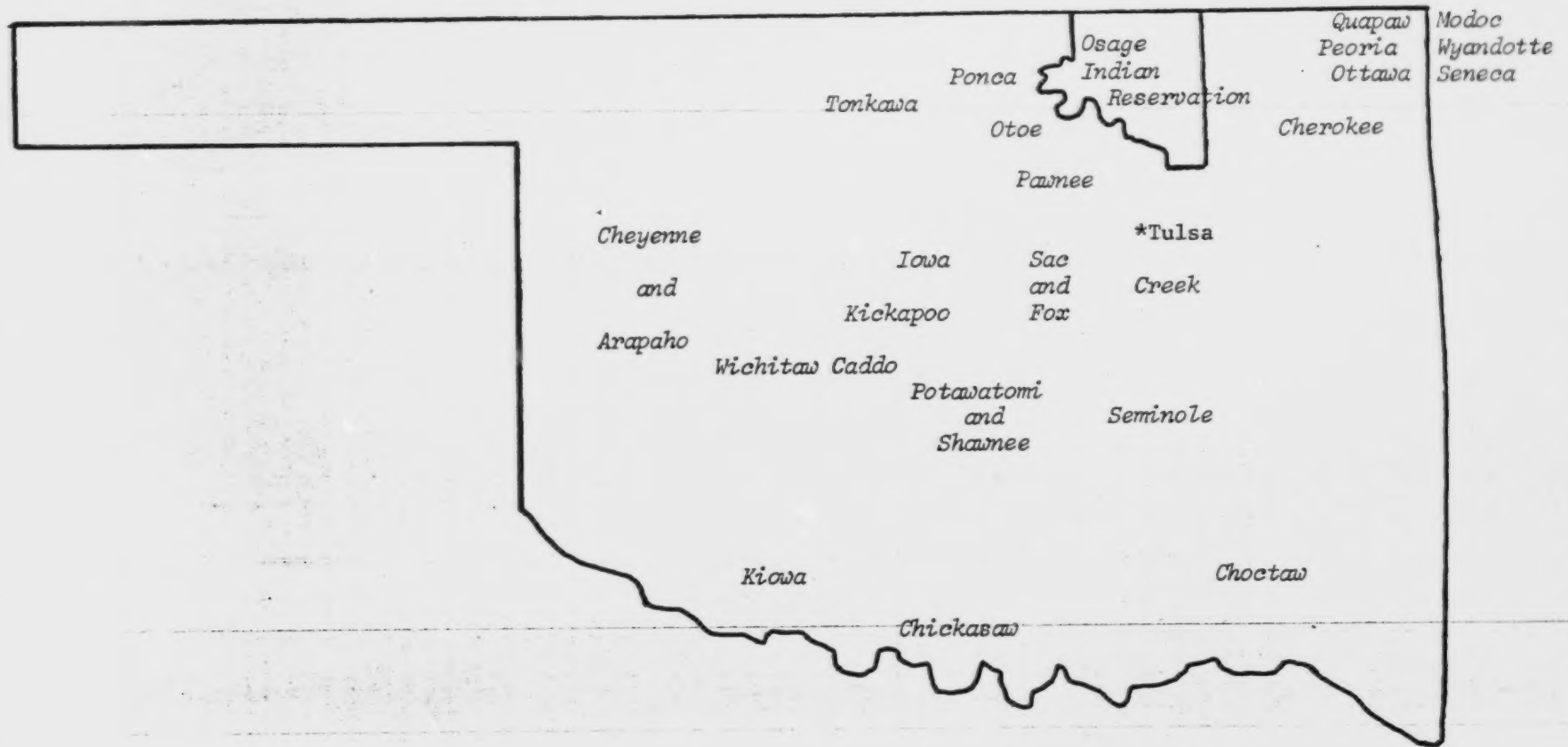
During his very early years, Tom's family traveled frequently because his father was in the military service. Tom attended schools in California, Oklahoma, and Kansas. He completed grade school and high school in Lawrence, Kansas. He attended a teacher's college in Emporia, Kansas for three years and subsequently obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and a Master's in Radio/Television and Film from the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

While attending teacher's college in Emporia, Kansas, Tom obtained his first job with a local radio station. According to him, "It was fun to have people know me and my voice."¹ In Kansas City, Missouri, he became involved with a television station, first as an intern while attending the University of Kansas in Lawrence, then working part-time on weekends.

Since 1973, Tom has worked as a reporter for WCCO Television in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Tom is one of the few Indian people employed by the television industry in the Twin Cities area. He feels he is learning from one of the best news media in the country.

¹Tom Beaver, interview by Kay Gamble at WCCO Television, Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 25, 1975.

OKLAHOMA



*BIRTHPLACE OF TOM BEAVER

As a reporter, some of his duties include: editing, interviewing, researching, and writing.

Tom would like to see Indian education integrated with the entire school program so that all students can learn about Indian people. In Tom's opinion, "Indians know about Indians just by being Indian. They learn about their family and history from their parents. Many people do not realize this. They assume an Indian in Minnesota is the same as an Indian in New Mexico, which is not true. People distinguish between an Englishman and a German, but not an Apache and an Ojibwe. To them, all Indians are the same. People should realize this is not true."²

The children of today are introduced to television from birth. Tom sees television as "a very powerful medium that forms ideas and opinions. What we say is news actually becomes the news. For example, if television viewers see a negative, stereotyped image of the Indian, it leads them to believe all Indians are that way."³

The Creek Tribe recently started a newspaper called the Muscogee News. It helps Tom keep up-to-date with what is happening in Oklahoma. Tom likes to return to visit, but being a reporter does not leave him with much leisure time.

The greatest advantage Tom sees for Indian people living in a basically non-Indian world is, "to be able to clearly see that there is more than one type of person, more than one culture. People should be learning all the time from other people."⁴

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

NATIVE AMERICANS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TOM BEAVER CREEK TELEVISION REPORTER

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of the Indian Elementary Curriculum Project wishes to thank the following individuals and institutions for helping to make this biographical study unit possible;

Tom Beaver, Creek, for information about his life;

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Muskogee Area Office, Muskogee, Oklahoma, for information about the Creek tribe;

Chris Spotted Eagle, Houma, for his photograph of Tom Beaver;

Patrick Des Jarlait, Jr., Red Lake Ojibwe, for the map illustration.

II. CURRICULUM UNIT

Native Americans of the Twentieth Century - Tom Beaver

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

TOM BEAVER

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Since 1973, Tom has worked as a reporter for WCCO Television in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Tom is one of the few Indian people employed by the television industry in the Twin Cities area. He feels he is learning from one of the best news media in the country. As a reporter, some of his duties include: editing, interviewing, researching, and writing.

Tom would like to see Indian education integrated with the entire school program so that all students can learn about Indian people. In Tom's opinion, "Indians know about Indians just by being Indian. They learn about their family and history from their parents. Many people do not realize this. They assume an Indian in Minnesota is the same as an Indian in New Mexico, which is not true. People distinguish between an Englishman and a German, but not an Apache and an Ojibwe. To them, all Indians are the same. People should realize this is not true."²

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CREEK TRIBE

Tom Beaver is a member of the Creek tribe, now located primarily in Oklahoma. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Area Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma, the name Creek is from the name "Ochese Creek Indians." This name was given to them by British agents because there

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

was a large number of watercourses in Creek country. Ochese Creek was an old name for the Ocmulgee River in Georgia. As time passed, the name was shortened to Creek.⁵

Another name for the tribe in the native language is *Muskoke* or *Maskoge*. The English spelling of the name is *Muscogee* or *Muskogee*. Neither the origin nor an explanation of this name has yet been found in the Creek language.⁶ Some ethnologists have thought that the name *Maskoke* may have originated from an Algonquian word *Maskek* or *Maskeg*, meaning "swamp" or "marsh."⁷

In the southeastern United States, mainly east of the Mississippi River and south of the Ohio River, were Indian nations that spoke the Muskogean languages. One of these nations, the Creek, lived mostly in what is now known as Alabama and Georgia. The Creek Confederacy was in existence as early as 1540, the time of De Soto's expeditions. The Creek nation increased in number and power between 1700 and 1790. Their population by 1770 was about 20,000 people. The Creek policy with the Europeans during this time was one of neutrality. They did not want political, educational, or religious involvement with the Europeans. The Creek had their own political and educational systems. They resisted missionary influence throughout the 1700's. Their non-Indian neighbors, who were called Georgians, did not recognize the Creek land rights or accept British policy. This made it difficult for the Creek to remain neutral. The Creek were slowly pushed westward, losing their land by treaties. The Georgians adopted a policy of eliminating all Indians from their borders. With the help of President Andrew Jackson, Congress passed the Removal Act of 1830. This act forced the Creek and other Indian nations to Indian territory in Oklahoma.

The Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole nations were known as the Five Civilized Tribes. This name was given to them because they appeared to have adopted some of the ways of Anglo-American culture. Many families of the five nations lived very comfortably with prosperous farms, homes, and industries. Some of the leaders of the five nations owned trading establishments and ferries. The tribal governments supported churches and mission schools from their own funds. In addition, the United States Supreme Court in 1832 guaranteed the Five Civilized Tribes the right of self-government. All of these accomplishments were wiped out by removal.

Approximately 20,000 Creek were removed to Oklahoma between 1836 and 1840. During this period, the Creek and other Indian nations endured a great deal of suffering from bad roads, storms, blizzards, sickness and death. The Creek established their seat of government at

⁵Letter from the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Muskogee Area Office, Muskogee, Oklahoma 74401. November 29, 1977.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Their government consisted of a principal chief, judicial department and legislature. The Creek legislature consisted of the House of Kings and the House of Warriors. It was a time of rebuilding for the Creek and other Indian nations.

The Five Civilized Tribes and other Indian tribes were removed to all of Oklahoma except the panhandle. The five nations began to rebuild economically and politically. The Creek adopted their first written constitution in 1858. As the Creek rebuilt, they wanted to share and exchange ideas with any other Indian nations with whom they came into contact. The Civil War interrupted the internal growth of the five nations. The Federal Government in 1864 took the western half of Indian territory from the Five Civilized Tribes because some of them sided with the Confederacy during the Civil War. Again, the Creek and other Indian nations had to start rebuilding.

By 1873, the Five Civilized Tribes had again organized their educational, tribal, and governmental systems, as well as their own churches. On October 6, 1875, the Creek Council and principal chief incorporated the International Printing Company which was composed of representatives from all the Five Civilized Tribes. This company published and edited a newspaper called the *Indian Journal*. This newspaper not only published the current news of the Five Civilized Tribes but also any information about legislation and lobbying in Washington D. C. covering Indian interests. The company was eventually destroyed by fire but another newspaper was rebuilt on the same site and was called the *Muskogee Phoenix* which still operates today.

By the late 1880's, the Five Civilized Tribes again demonstrated that they were self-sufficient. In 1887, the General Allotment or Dawes Act was passed. The objective of the Dawes Act was "to provide for the allotment of lands in severalty to Indians on the various reservations."⁸ This meant that tribal lands were divided into individual units and distributed to individual members of the tribe. Each head of a family was allotted 160 acres, with lesser amounts allotted to single persons and children. The surplus land became open to white settlement. According to Wilcomb E. Washburn, in 1887 there was 138,000,000 acres of tribal landholdings, and by 1934 there was 48,000,000. The Indians receiving allotments were under the civil and criminal jurisdiction in which they lived. Because the Five Civilized Tribes had self-government and were not given reservations in Oklahoma under the Removal Act, the United States government needed the consent of the Five Civilized Tribes to implement the allotment act. The Five Civilized Tribes did not consent to allotment. In 1898, the Curtis Act was passed. The Curtis Act dissolved the governments of any Indian tribe. The governments of the Five Civilized Tribes were dissolved and they were forced to accept the allotment act. This brought an end to domestic independent Indian nations.

⁸Spicer, Edward H. A Short History of the Indians of the United States. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1969, page 200.

Today, there are four main groups of Creek in Oklahoma which form today's Creek Confederacy. Each has a tribal council. The seat of government is still at Okmulgee, in eastern Oklahoma. Recognizing very early the need for education, the Creek today contribute their industry and skills to every major contemporary occupation.⁹

REPORTER

Tom Beaver is a reporter. A reporter gathers and reports news. A reporter must communicate easily with people, gather important facts, make a story interesting, and remember that a story has two sides. There are six questions answered when reporting a good story: who, where, when, what, how, and why.

Most reporters receive a formal education in journalism. Journalism is a profession of recording events in which the public has an interest. Some skills of a journalist are: reporting, writing, editing, broadcasting, and photography. Journalists work in many communications media, such as newspapers, magazines, television, and radio.

TELEVISION

Tom Beaver is a television reporter. The word "television" is derived from the Greek word *tele* and the Latin verb *videre*. *Tele* means "far" and *videre* means "to see." Combining the two words means "to see far."¹⁰

The first television sets were sold in 1946. Six television stations served the few thousand sets in circulation. In 1973, there were 110 million television sets in circulation with more than 900 commercial and public television stations. Commercial television stations sell advertising time to pay for their operating costs and to make a profit. Public television stations are nonprofit organizations that depend on business, government, and public contributions to pay for their operating costs. The programs of the commercial and public stations differ greatly. Commercial television stations broadcast mostly entertainment programs, while public television stations broadcast mostly educational and cultural programs.

Television today has three major commercial networks: ABC, the American Broadcasting Company; CBS, the Columbia Broadcasting System; and NBC, the National Broadcasting Company. The major networks are located in New York City, New York, and in Hollywood, California. The major networks send out their programs to affiliated stations. Affiliated stations are independently owned and receive money from the major networks for broadcasting their programs. For example, WCCO Television in Minneapolis, Minnesota is an affiliated station of CBS.

⁹For more information about the Creek tribe, see Section X, Resources, for a list of materials.

¹⁰The World Book Encyclopedia. Volumes 11 and 19, Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1973, 1977, U.S.A.

The first nationwide color program was the Tournament of Roses parade in Pasadena, California on January 1, 1954. Today the networks keep people up to date about events that are happening all over the world. The networks provide entertainment, news, education, sports, and other programs.

IV. STUDENT ACTIVITIES

See VII, Directions and Procedures for Teachers.

Activity One: Fill in the Blanks (Optional).

Activity Two: Word Find.

V. OBJECTIVES

A. Given the background information:

1. The students will correctly state that Tom Beaver is a member of the Creek tribe;
2. The students will correctly state that most Creek people presently live in the mideastern section of Oklahoma;
3. The students will correctly identify another name for the Creek tribe;
4. The students will correctly identify the profession of Tom Beaver as a reporter;
5. The students will correctly define a reporter as a person who gathers and reports news;
6. The students will identify four skills of a journalist;
7. The students will identify six questions often asked by a reporter;
8. The students will correctly state the derivation of the word "television."

VI. MATERIALS NEEDED

- A. Tom Beaver biographical study folder;
- B. Activity sheets one (optional) and two, duplicated for each student.

VII. DIRECTIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS

- A. Discuss the background information with the students, emphasizing the following: Tom Beaver's profession, tribe, and locations of his birthplace and tribe; a reporter is a person who gathers and reports news; another name for the Creek tribe; the skills of a journalist; the six questions asked by a reporter; and the derivation of the word "television."
- B. Make a chart showing how many hours of television the students watch in a week. Have the students vote for their favorite and least favorite television program and discuss why these programs were chosen. Discuss with the students what they do with their leisure time when they are not watching television.
- C. Discuss with the students the definition of communications media and list past and present examples. (Past: pony express, town criers, messengers, smoke signals, carrier pigeons, etc. Present: radio, television, newspapers, magazines, telephone, teletype, satellite, etc.) Describe the examples with stories. Have the students illustrate the stories.
- D. List the six questions answered when reporting a story: who, where, what, when, how, and why. Have the students report a story in which the six questions are answered.
- E. Have the students compare and contrast a national and local news program. For example: national news programs focus on what is happening all over the world; and, local news programs focus on the area where you live.
- F. Group the students in pairs and have them interview each other. Have the students then report the interview results to the class. Limit the number of questions so that each student has an opportunity to respond.
- G. Have the students identify an individual they would like to interview, and list the questions they would like to have answered.
- H. Have the students complete Activities One (optional) and Two.

VIII. CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY

- A. Communications media - a means of communication for the general public, such as radio, television, newspapers, and magazines.
- B. Creek - a North American tribe of Indian people presently located primarily in Oklahoma. For more information, see Creek Tribe, Section III, Background Information.

- C. Edit - revise, collect, correct, and arrange material for publication or presentation.
- D. Five Civilized Tribes - the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole Indian tribes of the southeastern United States. These tribes were given the name because they appeared to have adopted some of the ways of the Anglo-American culture.
- E. Interview - a meeting to obtain information by questioning a person or persons.
- F. Oklahoma - a state in the south central United States, also called Indian territory under the Removal Act of 1830. The name "Oklahoma" is derived from the Choctaw word *okla* and *homma* or *humma*. *Okla* means "people" and *homma* means "red." Combining the two means "red people."¹¹
- G. Reporter - a person who gathers and reports news.
- H. Research - an investigation to find out more about a subject (including people, books, films, etc.).

IX. ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

- A. Arrange a field trip to local television stations.
- B. Have the students interview someone at school or at home, then report to the class.
- C. Have the students create their own newscast by reporting school activities.
- D. Have the students do a television report from newspaper headlines.
- E. Have the students name and categorize different types of television programs, such as news, cartoons, and documentaries.
- F. Have the students list all the channels and call letters of television stations in their area.
- G. Have the students discuss what people did in their leisure time before television became popular.
- H. Invite someone from the communications media to talk to the students.

¹¹United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Muskogee Area Office, Muskogee, Oklahoma 74401.

X. RESOURCES

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XI. EVALUATION

- A. Did the students state that Tom Beaver is a member of the Creek tribe?
- B. Did the students state that most of the Creek live in the mid-eastern section of Oklahoma?
- C. Did the students identify another name for the Creek tribe?

- D. Did the students identify the profession of Tom Beaver as a reporter?
- E. Did the students define a reporter as a person who gathers and reports news?
- F. Did the students identify four skills of a journalist?
- G. Did the students identify the six questions asked by a reporter?
- H. Did the students state the derivation of the word "television?"

TOM BEAVER
ACTIVITY SHEET ONE
FILL IN THE BLANKS

Write the correct word to complete each sentence.

One of Tom Beaver's duties at WCCO Television is _____ the news. This includes _____, which is arranging and revising materials before it reaches the public.

editing

reporting

He is often sent out to _____, where he has to use his skill of _____ to select the most important information that the speaker or speakers present. If he is not familiar with what is to be presented, he often has to investigate or _____ the topic to see what has been said or done previously.

listening

attend meetings

research

Sometimes he appears on the news program _____ someone. He often has to shorten what is said into a few sentences. Then using his _____ ability, he presents this to the public.

Through frequent exposure on television, people such as Tom gain recognition from viewing audiences.

interviewing

speaking

TOM BEAVER
ACTIVITY SHEET ONE
FILL IN THE BLANKS

ANSWERS

Write the correct word to complete each sentence.

One of Tom Beaver's duties at WCCO Television is
_____ reporting _____ the news. This includes
_____ editing _____, which is arranging and revising
materials before it reaches the public.

editing reporting

He is often sent out to _____ attend _____
_____ meetings _____, where he has to use his skill
of _____ listening _____ to select the most important
information that the speaker or speakers present. If he
is not familiar with what is to be presented, he often has
to investigate or _____ research _____ the topic to see
what has been said or done previously.

listening attend meetings research

Sometimes he appears on the news program
_____ interviewing _____ someone. He often
has to shorten what is said into a few sentences. Then
using his _____ speaking _____ ability, he presents
this to the public.

Through frequent exposure on television, people
such as Tom gain recognition from viewing audiences.

interviewing speaking

TOM BEAVER
ACTIVITY SHEET TWO
WORD FIND

C B A ————— Z Y X

M	B	U	T	A	N	N	O
R	E	P	O	R	T	E	R
X	A	I	M	E	R	W	E
T	V	O	T	H	I	S	O
Y	E	O	H	E	B	I	T
C	R	E	E	K	E	Y	W
Z	O	W	C	C	O	D	O

F G — L M N O — T U

H K

P S

I J

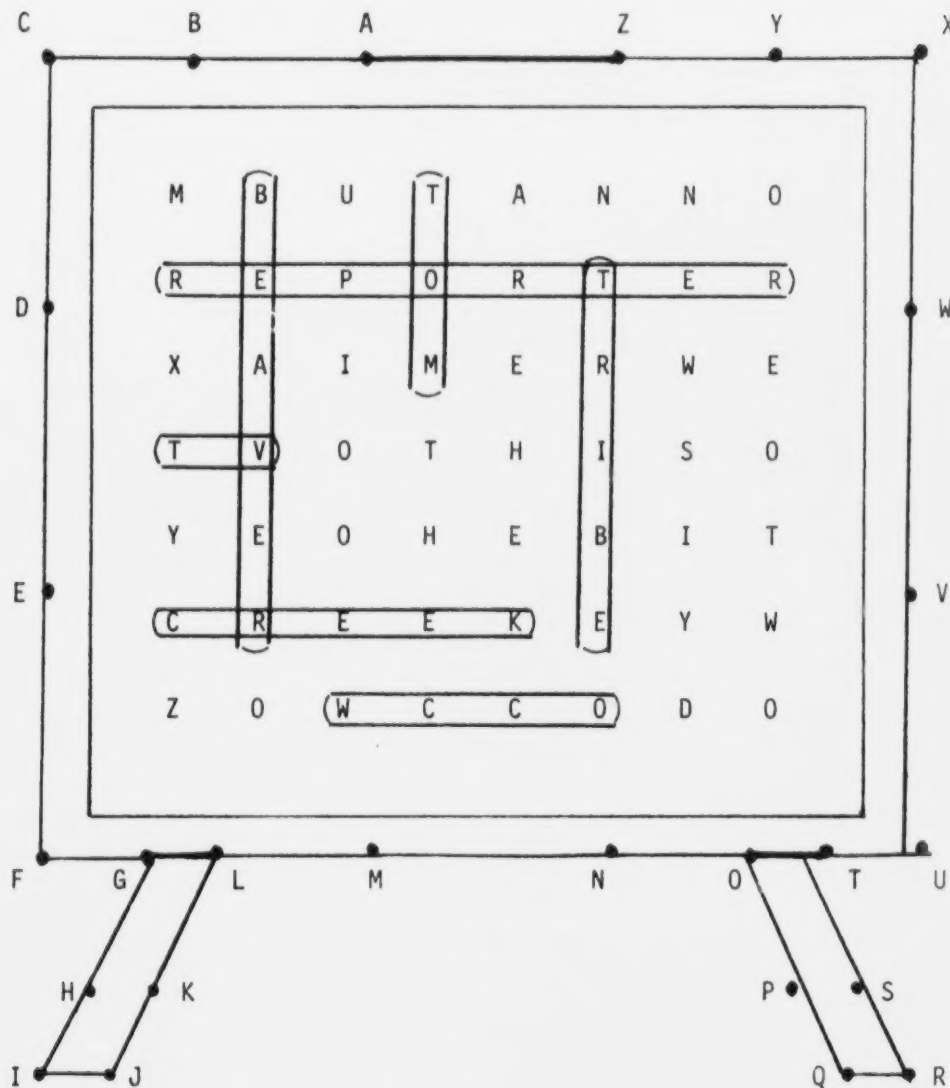
Q R

1. Connect the dots
2. Find and circle the clue words by moving across or down.

CLUE WORDS

TOM	CREEK
BEAVER	NEWS
REPORTER	WCCO
TV	TRIBE

TOM BEAVER
ACTIVITY SHEET TWO
WORD FIND
ANSWERS



1. Connect the dots
2. Find and circle the clue words by moving across or down.

CLUE WORDS

TOM	CREEK
BEAVER	NEWS
REPORTER	WCCO
TV	TRIBE